

Georgia Department of Human Resources

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) services are available to Georgia parents who need assistance. The custodial parent may apply at the OCSE office that serves his/her county. There is an application fee of \$25 (free for welfare recipients). The custodial parent is asked to furnish legal documents, if available, and information about the non-custodial parent.

OCSE's budget for state fiscal year 2004 is \$69.9 million, including \$52.9 million in federal funds and \$17 million in state funds.

Child support services include:

- Locating non-custodial parents
- Establishing paternity
- Establishing and enforcing child support orders
- Establishing and enforcing medical support orders
- Collecting and distributing support payments

Collection and enforcement tools available to OCSE:

- Withholding child support from paychecks or unemployment benefits
- Intercepting federal and/or state income tax refunds to pay child support arrears
- Garnishing workers' compensation benefits
- Reporting parents owing more than \$1,000 in child support payments to credit bureaus
- Suspending or revoking driver's, professional or occupational licenses for failure to pay child support
- Reviewing and modifying child support orders periodically
- Intercepting lottery winnings of more than \$5,000
- Filing contempt of court actions which may result in a jail sentence if the non-custodial parent is found in contempt of court
- Filing liens and levy on tangible or intangible property
- Seizing matched bank accounts after notice

Collections:

- Georgia collected \$523.7 million in FY 2003.
- Of the \$523.7 million collected in FY 2003, \$9.6 million was collected from intercepted state tax refunds, \$33.3 million from federal tax refunds, 7.3 million from unemployment compensation benefits, \$86,598 from lottery winnings and \$32 million in payments by the Family Support Registry to parents whose case was not established by OCSE.

- In July 1999, the Family Support Registry began processing child support payments made by payroll deduction. The Registry, required by federal law, gives employers a central destination for all support payments.
- Since 1998, Georgia has collected \$2.5 billion in child support payments.

Caseload:

- OCSE has 456,960 cases in Georgia.
- The cases represent 624,000 children.
- Georgia child support agents have an average caseload of 588 cases each.

Parents under court order to pay child support through OCSE:

- 332,750 in Georgia
- About 50% of those who owe child support in Georgia pay
- About 95% of non-custodial parents owing child support in Georgia are fathers
- Approximately 223,238 cases receive a check each month

OCSE does not:

- Help anyone get a divorce
- Find custodial parents
- Take legal action about visitation rights or custody
- Enforce court-ordered payment of unpaid bills not related to child support payments
- Help legitimize children